

The Brethren Evangelist,

ASHLAND, OHIO.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1896.

Editorial.

THE BIBLE NOT A DEAD BOOK.

The world abounds in books which may justly be denominated as *dead* books. There are large libraries containing thousands of volumes which are practically dead books, so far as their usefulness is concerned. The world has outgrown them. The vicissitudes of life, the progress of humanity, the ever varying needs of men and women, have rendered hundreds and thousands of books useless. They are unreliable. The principles of political economy which years ago were regarded as *fixed*, have in late years been reversed, and the text books on political economy then used in the schools, now need revision, or they will remain useless, dead books of bygone days. The same is true of the principles and laws of science. Theories accepted as true a century ago, are now rejected and replaced by others. There are few, *very* few books, one hundred years old that are now considered authority on the subjects which they treat. They have outlived their usefulness. They are "behind the age." They are not "up with the times." An Encyclopedia twenty years old is useless and must be made over. The text books in our schools are continually undergoing changes. Methods are no longer the same. You are in search of information on a very important subject. You want something that is authority. You take an Encyclopedia, a Dictionary or other reference book, and the *first* thing you do is to look at the *date* of its issue, and *this* determines its authority and reliableness.

Take a catalogue of 5000 books, follow title after title, and how few have retained their vitality through the short period of fifty years. It is true there are a few books that have withstood the ravages of time, and retained their vitality down through the ages. The "Iliad" still lives; so does Plato's "Apology" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet." But the books that have thus come down to us through the corridors of time, retaining at least a degree of vitality are few and can be num-

bered on one's fingers. Even these show signs of decay and decreasing vitality. They are losing their hold upon the people, and live only for the language in which they were written. The average life of nine-tenths of all books published is very short. Of the thousands of books published, the average sale is but 1000 copies each. A large majority never pay the expense of making. They are put upon the market, live a few short years, then pass away to be heard of no more. It is a sad commentary on the business of book-making that one of wide experience, one who speaks with authority, declares that if a book is still on the market *two years* after its publication, it is safe to buy it.

There is one book, however, as old as the oldest, that has lost none of its youth and vitality. This book we call the Bible; it is not a book of one language only; it has been translated into all languages; but whatever the language into which it has been translated, its freshness and vitality have not in the least diminished. Sciences are born and reborn; institutions rise, flourish and decay; the decrepitude of age is clearly visible on all the objects around us; evanescence is written on all things human; but amid all the vicissitudes of human life, the Bible, the good old Book of books, still lives; growing in power and strength and freshness. It is the word of God and the word shall live forever. Generations may come and go, pyramids may crumble and return to dust, but the word of God abides forever. Yea, even heaven and earth shall pass away, the sun, moon and stars, but not the word of God. The Bible, the blessed book of God, has survived all opposition. Many have been the efforts to destroy it. It has been committed to the flames; its translators have suffered martyrdom; it has been chained to keep it from the public; its reading has been made a crime; infidelity has turned all its intellectual strength and power against it. This old book, its enemies have said, must be closed, and a new era is to be inaugurated; a new civilization created, governed by principles more modern than the principles of the Bible. But all these efforts have been futile. The Bible is the best and most widely read book in existence to-day. It is found in almost every family in the land. Millions of people read it every day, and on the Sabbath-day no less than twenty million people study one and the same portion of God's word.

How shall we account for this wonderful vitality of the Bible—a vitality which grows in intensity with the growing years; how shall we account for this book which knows no decrepitude of age, which never grows old, always fresh with the bloom of immortal youth. How shall we account for this living book among dead and useless books? There are several reasons why the Bible retains its vitality.

1. In the first place the Bible contains the word of God, a message from the Father to his children. It is a message which from the very nature of it, can never grow old. It is a message for all people, all classes, all ages, for all time. It tells the story of lost men and women, and invites them to return to him, and he will have mercy upon them and abundantly pardon. Observation and experience, even aside from revelation, teach us that we have wandered away from God, and the message inviting us back into sweet fellowship and communion with him, is an ever welcome message. So long as humanity wanders about in darkness, error and superstition, struggling for light, life and immortality, so long will God's message, inviting us to a higher and nobler life, retain its beauty and freshness. The Bible lives because it contains a *living* message from the *living* God.

2. In the second place the Bible retains its vitality, because it meets all the diversified needs of the human soul. The human heart has longings and aspirations, which God alone can satisfy. In the blessed volume of the book, God tells us how to meet and satisfy the hungerings and thirstings of the soul, the longings for nearness to the Father our Maker and Preserver. The history of humanity has been one of constant progress from the earliest period, physically, intellectually and spiritually. The present generation has reached higher attainments than any that has gone before it, but there is one thing humanity has never yet been able to outgrow—it is the ceaseless longing for rest in God. A sense of want, of need, of dependence on God, is present in every soul. Hide it as we will it is there still. Surround the soul with all the comforts this life can afford; a beautiful mansion with elegant furnishings, decorated walls; abundance of gold and silver; pleasant associations and friends; grant all these, yet far down in the human heart there remains the ceaseless longing for a some-